

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 179

By Gant

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the citizens of McNairy County upon the celebration of the county's 200th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in joining with the counties that comprise this great State in celebrating joyous and historic occasions; and

WHEREAS, bountiful and beautiful McNairy County and its citizens are most assuredly deserving of special recognition, as they celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the county's founding this year; and

WHEREAS, created on October 8, 1823, McNairy County was formed from a part of Hardin County and named in honor of John McNairy, whom President George Washington had appointed as one of the three judges of the Southwest Territory; and

WHEREAS, the traders, trappers, farmers, and planters of the county's earliest days led the way for the doctors, lawyers, teachers, preachers, and business leaders who followed; and

WHEREAS, the first county seat was named Purdy in honor of John Purdy, the government surveyor who laid out the town lots; located on the stage road that ran from Nashville to Mississippi, Purdy developed a reputation as a beautiful town; and

WHEREAS, in 1831, McNairy County built a new courthouse, where both Davy Crockett and James K. Polk made political speeches; and

WHEREAS, Purdy University opened its doors in 1859 to establish itself as one of the leading centers of higher education in the area, with courses in Greek, Latin, science, and philosophy; and

WHEREAS, after a two-decade effort, the county seat was moved from Purdy to Selmer, which was closer to the important rail line then serving the county; in addition to the county seat

of Selmer, McNairy County's other incorporated towns are Adamsville, Bethel Springs, Michie, Milledgeville, Finger, Ramer, Eastview, Stantonville, and Guys; and

WHEREAS, McNairy County divided along political lines during the 1861 secession crisis, with some 1,000 voting for secession and 800 against, and McNairy County was the scene of looting and burning throughout the Civil War years; and

WHEREAS, McNairy Countians returned to agriculture during the Reconstruction Era, producing cotton, corn, and hogs. By 1920, the county population totaled 18,350 people, most of whom tilled the 3,263 farms, and had six high schools and 109 elementary schools; Selmer had a population of 546 and boasted three banks, a newspaper, and various commercial establishments; and

WHEREAS, inexpensive power from the Tennessee Valley Authority fueled McNairy County's economic growth in the mid-twentieth century; in 1945, Brown Shoe Company and Myrna Mills, a textile manufacturer, became the first industries to locate in the county; and

WHEREAS, the success of these industries encouraged other textile manufacturers to build plants in McNairy County; in the 1970s, E. B. Blasingame founded Aqua Glass, which quickly emerged as the county's largest employer, with approximately 1,100 employees, with other major employers including General Electric Corporation, Diversified Refrigeration, and Reitter & Schefenacker USA; and

WHEREAS, one of McNairy County's most well-known residents was McNairy County Sheriff Buford Pusser, whose career in combating lawlessness was chronicled in three best-selling books by W.R. Morris, several blockbuster movies, and a television series; and

WHEREAS, McNairy County counts some 25,866 residents in the 2020 census; the county's 564 square miles of rolling hills and flatlands are dotted with homes, pastures, fields, and well-groomed towns, and the Davy Crockett Highway (U.S. Route 64) has been

transformed into a four-lane scenic highway that traverses the Volunteer State and stretches from New York to California; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of McNairy County have added and continue to add immeasurably to the strength and character of Tennessee; their history and accomplishments have helped build the cultural richness for which this State is known; and

WHEREAS, McNairy County is one of the great counties in Tennessee, and it is most appropriate that we honor this fine community and its citizenry as they commemorate this significant milestone in their historic existence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the citizens of McNairy County upon the celebration of the county's bicentennial and extend to them our best wishes for continued success, growth, and prosperity in their outstanding community, which is a true Tennessee treasure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.